IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (original) A method for producing an aqueous solution of free hydroxylamine (HA) using simultaneous countercurrent treatment of a solution of a HA salt with ammonia or ammonia water, separation of the HA solution obtained by distillation into aqueous solutions of HA and a salt fraction under a pressure above the atmospheric pressure, reconcentration by distillation of the aqueous HA solution in the countercurrent with a strip medium in a reactive distillation column with a liquid-phase evaporator, characterized in that the stripping medium is a mixture of steam and a non-condensable inert gas and in that the process temperature is controlled at a defined pressure by the quantity of non-condensable inert gas at the column inlet.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1, characterized in that nitrogen is used as the non-condensable inert gas.

3. (currently amended) The method according to ~~claims 1 and 2~~claim 1, characterized in that controlling the process temperature by increasing the portion of non-condensable inert gas results in a drop in temperature and controlling the process temperature by decreasing the portion of said gas results in an increase in temperature.

4. (currently amended) The method according to ~~one or several of claims 1 through 3~~claim 1, characterized in that the process is performed at column pressures in the range from 1.05 to 2.5 bara, preferably from 1.1 to 1.8 bara.

5. (currently amended) The method according to ~~one or several of claims 1 through 4~~claim 1, characterized in that the weight of the non-condensable inert gas is 0.44 to 5.8 times, preferably 1.8 to 5.4 times the weight of the feeding quantity (aqueous solution of HA salt).

Respectfully submitted,

WELSH & KATZ, LTD.

Gerald T. Shekleton
Registration No. 27,466

Dated: April 7, 2005
Welsh & Katz, Ltd.
120 South Riverside Plaza, 22nd Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: (312) 655-1500